

can read. When I read literally the words of the Constitution, I believe what our Founding Fathers were trying to do is to make sure we don't establish in this country a church that somehow is sanctioned by the Government. They just didn't want to go there. Seeing what happened in some other countries, they didn't want to have any part of that.

Having said that, our Founding Fathers were a religious people. They were people of faith, and they drew on their faith, frankly, in drawing up this document and trying to resolve their differences in reaching the core on this Constitution.

The Pledge of Allegiance, I don't believe, existed when those folks were working on the Constitution. In fact, the words "under God" were only added, I believe, in 1954, some 51 years ago. I would ask, given the reliance on faith and people calling on their faith in 1787 when drafting the Constitution, how would they feel about a Pledge of Allegiance that said, "one nation under God"? My guess is they would feel pretty good about it. Rather than saying that we ought to strike that language "under God," they would probably say we ought to keep that in, and I would have to agree with them.

We will hear more about this issue going forward, I am sure. Hopefully, when we do, we will think back not just about the Constitution and what the words actually say in the first amendment, but we will also think back to the way people comported themselves and how they drew on their faith in 1787 as they wrestled with drafting this document and coming to consensus on this document. I think they would want the words "one nation, under God" to be in the Pledge of Allegiance if we were to have one.

We have all said it hundreds, probably thousands, of times. I think we got it right in 1954, and I think we ought to leave it that way.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. BENNETT). The Senator from South Carolina.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Mr. DEMINT. Mr. President, I appreciate the Senator from Delaware speaking about our Constitution and religious freedoms because I would like to follow up on his remarks. This week, Americans watching the confirmation hearings of Judge John Roberts witnessed something unique about his character, something we had seen before but that is now undeniable—his humility. I believe humility is a virtue that we should all feel as Americans. We should be humble in light of the blessings that we have in this great country, humble in light of the courage of our Founders, and humble in light of the wisdom of the drafters of the Constitution.

This country was founded on religious freedom by our Founding Fathers, many of whom were deeply reli-

gious. They wanted to create a place where they could worship without fear of persecution. Unfortunately, the Federal district court declared yesterday that the phrase "under God" in our Pledge of Allegiance was unconstitutional. This is deeply troublesome and is no less irrational than it would be to declare the Constitution itself unconstitutional.

The ruling by the Federal court in California is yet another example of the hostility by many activist judges toward a time-honored tradition. This tradition has been defended by numerous Justices, including Justice O'Connor, who said that eliminating such references would sever ties to a history that sustains this Nation even today.

The Pledge of Allegiance began in 1892 as a patriotic exercise, expressing loyalty to our Nation. It is a part of an American tapestry of time-honored and historically significant traditions that have come under attack in this country. By international standards, we are a young country. Yet we seem so quick and so willing to throw out parts of our heritage that our Founders recognized as important. "One nation under God" is no more the establishment or endorsement of religion than our national motto, "in God we trust," which is here above our door and above the Speaker's chair on the other side of the Capitol; or the phrase "God bless America," the closing words often used by the President when making public comments or speeches.

The Declaration of Independence states that our rights are inalienable for one reason, because we are endowed by our creator with these rights. All of our references to God are the ways the Government properly and constitutionally acknowledges our religious heritage.

We are a great nation, but we are also one nation under God. We are filled with people who know how fortunate we are and how different our lives could be elsewhere.

This is why it is important that we are reminded and that our children are reminded to be humble. Reciting that the United States is one nation under God is a statement of humility, a way of acknowledging that even as a world superpower, we recognize there is something bigger than we are, that our freedoms in this country come from God—not from Government. If we expel God from our public life, and if we lose humility that comes with the belief in a creator, our children and grandchildren will inherit an arrogant nation that has little hope for the future.

I yield the floor and suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. BENNETT. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be dispensed with.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. DEMINT). Without objection, it is so ordered.

CHURCH AND STATE

Mr. BENNETT. Mr. President, I have followed with interest the remarks of the Senator from Delaware about the Founding Fathers. Like him, I am unburdened with a legal education, but like him I believe I can read the English language, and that I have spent some time studying not only the Constitution but the history behind it. In the spirit of the remarks that have been made here, I add a few comments of my own.

It is very clear to me from studying the history of the first amendment that the primary concern of the Founders was to prevent the creation of State churches in the various States. There was never any movement to have a national church, but there were movements on the part of some of the individual States to have State churches. One of the reasons for the fact that there was not a national movement was that different States were dominated by different religions.

For example, the Puritans who came to what became the State of Massachusetts came to flee persecution they found in Europe. Then once they had established their colony in Massachusetts, they proceeded to persecute those who didn't agree with them. One of them, Roger Williams, went over to found what is now the State of Rhode Island, and created in Rhode Island a bastion of religious liberty about which the Senator from Rhode Island instructed a group of us at noon today. I found his presentation to be very interesting and worthwhile.

So a national religion covering all 13 States united in the United States of America was never in the cards. But there were some who felt that individual States might adopt a State church in that particular State, in one particular State or another. The Founding Fathers in the first amendment made it clear that there must not be a State church in any of the individual States. That was the driving force behind the words in the first amendment.

There are those in today's society who read the first amendment and its prescription of freedom of religion to mean that the Government should guarantee everyone freedom from religion, that the Government should vigorously put down any reference to religion that takes place in the public square.

I think that is a misreading of the Founders' intention, and I think that particular notion is behind the recent court ruling that has given rise to the speeches we have heard here on the floor.

I want to make one other observation about this, as long as I have the floor. America is known as a religious country. As I travel abroad and deal with some of our European friends, I find many of them to be perplexed by that. Indeed, one religious commentator said to me that if you are religious in Europe, you will be treated with disdain.